

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03
PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 EB-08 OMB-01
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R 141215Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8782
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 4574

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, ET, KU
SUBJECT: ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT LEADERS AGAIN IN
KUWAIT

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. ELF LEADERS, RECENTLY IN KUWAIT,
APPARENTLY ASKED FOR AND RECEIVED NEW COMMITMENTS OF
KUWAITI ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING PERHAPS PRIVATE AS WELL AS
GOK AID. KUWAITI MFA SOURCE EXPRESSED THE CONTINUED
KUWAITI BELIEF THAT THE ELF IS THE MOST MODERATE OF THE
ERITREAN GROUPS AND THAT IT DESERVES ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE,
WHICH WILL "FREE" OTHER ELF FUNDS TO PURCHASE ARMS.
HE ASKED WHETHER THE USG PLANS TO HELP THE ELF AND WAS
TOLD THAT IN LIGHT OF OUR CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP
WITH ETHIOPIA, THAT WOULD SEEM TO BE EXCLUDED. END
SUMMARY.

2. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT TWO ELF LEADERS,
ABDUL-QADR AHMED MOHAMMED NASSER, CHAIRMAN OF THE ELF
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REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AND
ABDULLA SULEIMAN ABDULLA, COUNCIL MEMBER, VISITED KUWAIT
UGUST 8-11. WHILE HERE, THEY REPORTEDLY CALLED ON THE
FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTERS AND THE HEAD OF THE KUWAITI
RED CRESCENT. AFTER THE MEETING WITH FON MIN SABAH AL-AHMED,
THE LATTER REPORTEDLY TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE HAD
"ADVISED NASSER TO ACHIEVE UNITY OF THE VARIOUS RESISTANCE

GROUPS IN ERITREA..." THE ERITREAN LEADERS ALSO SPOKE SEVERAL TIMES WITH LOCAL REPORTERS, WHO HIGHLIGHTED IN NEWS STORIES THE ELF'S NEED FOR FOOD, MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND ARMS. IN AN AUGUST 11 PRESS CONFERENCE, COVERED WIDELY IN KUWAITI DAILIES, NASSER REPORTEDLY TOLD NEWSMEN: "WE HAVE FOUND IN KUWAIT THE WILLINGNESS TO ASSIST US IN OUR STRUGGLE... WE WERE PROMISED THAT OUR REQUIREMENTS WOULD BE STUDIED, SO THAT KUWAIT COULD ASSIST US..."

3. EMBOFF SOUNDED OUT MFA AMERICAN/EUROPEAN DESK OFFICER AL-SHAREKH AUGUST 13 ON THE SIGNIFICANCE AND RESULTS OF THIS LATEST ELF APPROACH TO THE KUWAITIS. AL-SHAREKH EXPRESSED REGRET THAT THE SEVERAL ERITREAN REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS HAD NOT ACHIEVED UNITY BUT MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE GOK INTENDS TO CONTINUE HELPING THE ELF IN ANY EVENT. HE DESCRIBED THE ELF AS THE "MOST MODERATE, MOST RESPONSIBLE" OF THE GROUPS. HE WENT ON AT LENGTH ABOUT THEIR MODERATION, THE JUSTICE OF THE ERITREAN DEMAND FOR SELF-DETERMINATION (NOTING THAT KUWAIT HAD SUPPORTED THE ELF SINCE LONG BEFORE HAILE SELASSIE'S DOWNFALL), AND THE CONVINCING PRESENTATIONS WHICH THE ELF LEADERS HAD MADE TO KUWAITI OFFICIALS ON THEIR NEED FOR ASSISTANCE. AL-SHAREKH WAS NOT WILLING TO STATE THE AMOUNT OR EXACT NATURE OF THE FURTHER AID WHICH KUWAIT IS PLANNING FOR THE ELF, BUT HE SAID THERE WOULD BE MORE. CONFIDENTIAL

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HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE GOK MIGHT AUTHORIZE SOLICITATION OF FUNDS WITHIN THE KUWAITI SEMI-OFFICIAL "POPULAR ORGANIZATION" (I.E., PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, LABOR UNIONS, ETC.)

4. WHILE HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ARMS WOULD NOT BE PROVIDED--GENERAL KUWAITI FOREIGN POLICY FORBIDS THIS--AL-SHAREKH NOTED THAT OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE WOULD "FREE" ELF ASSETS TO PURCHASE MILITARY EQUIPMENT ELSEWHERE. HE ALSO OPINED THAT NO ARAB TROOPS WOULD BE SENT TO HELP THE ERITREANS, THOUGH HE EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN ABOUT RECENT PRESS REPORTS OF OUTSIDE MILITARY REINFORCEMENTS BEING SENT TO ETHIOPIA. AL-SHAREKH ALSO INQUIRED WHETHER THE USG PLANNED TO HELP THE ELF IN ANY WAY, ASSERTING THAT ELF GOALS AND IDEOLOGY APPEAR TO HIM TO BE LESS OBJECTIONABLE TO THE US THAN THOSE OF THE MENGISTO REGIME. EMBOFF REPLIED THAT HE WAS AWARE OF NO USG INTENTIONS OR PLANS FOR AID TO THE ELF, NOTING THAT THE USG MAINTAINS RELATIONS WITH THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH US PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY REDUCED, AT ETHIOPIAN REQUEST. MAESTRONE

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Message Attributes

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